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SUBJECT: CHAD POLMIL ISSUES: C-27JS VICE C-130JS? AND NEW ARMY COMMANDER SPEAKS DEFMIN'S LANGUAGE

REF: NDJAMENA 0433

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SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) The GOC is exploring the purchase of C-27J "Spartan" military transport aircraft, a joint Italian (Alenia) and U.S. (Lockheed Martin) product, in place of or to complement the C-130Js it long has sought to buy. If the Lockheed Martin connection with Alenia permits the USG to help Chad, through FMS or otherwise, to satisfy its legitimate need for strategic air transport by purchasing C-27Js, this would be a win-win situation from the USG policy perspective.

¶2. (SBU) Outgoing Chief of General Staff Al-Djinedi, who speaks no French, was replaced because he could not communicate with his boss, DEFMIN Kamougue, who speaks no Arabic, rather than for any reasons related to his politics or performance. Fairly frequent rotation of Chiefs of General Staff is not uncommon in Chad. Despite his abrupt destitution, Al-Djinedi may well continue to hold important positions here, reflecting his status as a model former rebel chieftain who renounced violence and returned to the Deby regime's fold, to which he as so far been loyal. END SUMMARY.

C-27JS VICE C-130JS?

¶3. (SBU) Visiting Knights of Malta Ambassador Jean-Christophe Heidsiek told Ambassador October 14 that the GOC is interested in exploring the purchase of C-27J "Spartan" transport aircraft, to satisfy part or all of its strategic air transport needs. The Spartan is a joint Italian (Alenia) and U.S. (Lockheed Martin) product, through partnership of Italy's Alenia and our Lockheed Martin companies. Heidsiek said that he would accompany Chad Air Force Chief General Mahamat Tahir Orozi to Turin and Rome next week for talks with Alenia. (We note that the U.S. military has recently purchased several hundred of these Spartans, which underlines their technical efficiency and tactical usefulness.)

NEW ARMY COMMANDER SPEAKS DEFMIN'S LANGUAGE

¶4. Outgoing Chief of General Staff Hassan Algadam Al-Djinedi, who speaks no French, was replaced because he could not communicate with his boss, DEFMIN Kamougue, who speaks no Arabic, rather than for any reasons related to his politics or performance, according to diplomats here familiar with the case. The French had tried to remedy the situation by sending Al-Djinedi to Paris to study French, but were chagrined when the DEFMIN prevailed on President Deby to replace him abruptly with a French- and Sara-speaking officer, General Mbaiomdenande Dionadji Alain, who hails from Kamougue's native southern Chad.

BIO INFO

¶5. (SBU) JEAN-CHRISTOPHE HEIDSIECK: A scion of the well-known champagne-producing family, Ambassador Heidsieck is based in Yaounde and accredited to Chad (since 2008) and other countries in the region by the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM). He receives no remuneration from the SMOM for his diplomatic efforts. In Chad, the SMOM supports a small medical assistance program (popular charitable clinics in the capital and one southern town) in Chad.) Heidsieck has long been active as a businessman in the region: He was Lockheed regional representative when the Chadians bought their first two C-130s in 1990. (We invite Embassy Yaounde and other embassies where Heidsieck might be accredited to expand or correct the information on him we provide here.)

¶6. (SBU) HASSAN AL-DJINEDI. The former Chief of General Staff is an ethnic "Arab." (This is an ethnic category in the Chadian national census that refers to various tribal groups, mostly nomadic or semi-nomadic, that inhabit the central Sahelian regions of Chad from east to west, comprising 10 to

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15 percent of the national population.) Al-Djinedi has a long history as an actor in Chad's perpetual civil wars since ¶1975. He was associated with pro-Libyan, anti-Chad forces in the 1979-80 war between Chad and Libya, where he fled in ¶1980. Al-Djinedi returned to Chad in 1992 but became disaffected and fled to Sudan in 1994, forming a rebel movement known as the Concorde Nationale du Tchad.

¶7. (SBU) In late 2007, Al-Djinedi signed the Sirte Accord between the GOC and an array of Chad rebel leaders and was one of the first rebel chiefs to return to Chad under its auspices. He was appointed Secretary of State for Defense (the number two position in the Defense Ministry) in January ¶2008. He remained loyal to Deby throughout the violent events of 2008 and was rewarded by being appointed Chief of General Staff in April 2009, just in time for him to command the Chadian Army in its victorious campaign to repulse a major rebel offensive in May 2009, winning the Battle of Am Dam in eastern Chad that shattered the invading rebel forces.

COMMENTS

¶8. (SBU) If the Lockheed Martin connection with Alenia permits the USG to help Chad, through FMS or otherwise, to satisfy its legitimate need for strategic air transport by purchasing C-27Js, this would be a win-win situation from the perspective of USG Chad policy. Purchasing C-27Js would be more economical for the GOC than buying C-130Js and might be no more expensive than buying refitted C-130Hs. The C-27Js can land at many more airports in Chad than the bigger C-130s, either Js or Hs, thus complementing USG efforts to make the Chadian military capable of combating terrorism in Chad's vast, remote, under-populated, and under-governed northern Saharan and Sahelian regions.

¶9. (SBU) Despite his abrupt destitution as Chief of General Staff, Al-Djinedi may well continue to hold important positions in the GOC, reflecting his status as a model former rebel chieftain who renounced violence and returned to the Deby regime's fold, to which he has so far been loyal. Fairly frequent rotation of Chiefs of General Staff is not uncommon in the Chadian military and ensures that the prestige and perks of high military position are shared among as many aspirants as possible and that no incumbent stays long enough to use it as a political power base.

¶10. (U) Minimize considered.

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